

**Amendments to the Claims**

Please cancel Claims 23 and 30. Please amend Claims 15, 16 and 24. The Claim Listing below will replace all prior versions of the claims in the application:

**Claim Listing**

1-14. (Canceled)

15. (Currently Amended) A method of treating a condition in a patient characterized by activation of an inflammatory cytokine cascade, comprising administering to the patient an effective amount of a polypeptide comprising a high mobility group box protein (HMGB) A box ~~or variant thereof~~ which can inhibit release of a proinflammatory cytokine from a cell, wherein said HMGB A box is ~~selected from the group consisting of an HMG1L5 A box, an HMG1L1 A box, an HMG1L4 A box, an HMGB A box polypeptide of BAC clone RP11-395A23, an HMG1L9 A box, an LOC122441 A box, an LOC139603 A box, and an HMG1L8 A box.~~

16. (Currently Amended) A method of treating a condition in a patient characterized by activation of an inflammatory cytokine cascade, comprising administering to the patient an effective amount of a polypeptide, wherein said polypeptide is a high mobility group box protein (HMGB) A box biologically active fragment ~~or variant thereof~~ which can inhibit release of a proinflammatory cytokine from a cell, wherein said HMGB A box is ~~selected from the group consisting of an HMG1L5 A box, an HMG1L1 A box, an HMG1L4 A box, an HMGB A box polypeptide of BAC clone RP11-395A23, an HMG1L9 A box, an LOC122441 A box, an LOC139603 A box, and an HMG1L8 A box.~~

17-19. (Canceled)

20. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 15 wherein said condition is sepsis.

21. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 15 wherein said condition is rheumatoid arthritis.
22. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 15 wherein said condition is selected from the group comprising endotoxic shock and allograft rejection.
23. (Canceled)
24. (Currently Amended) The method of Claim 15, wherein said polypeptide comprising a high mobility group box protein (HMGB) A box ~~or variant thereof~~ is administered as a pharmaceutical composition comprising a pharmaceutically acceptable excipient.
25. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 15, further comprising administering an antagonist of an early sepsis mediator.
26. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 25, wherein said antagonist of an early sepsis mediator is an antagonist of TNF.
27. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 16 wherein said condition is sepsis.
28. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 16 wherein said condition is rheumatoid arthritis.
29. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 16 wherein said condition is selected from the group comprising endotoxic shock and allograft rejection.
30. (Canceled)

31. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 16, wherein said polypeptide is administered as a pharmaceutical composition comprising a pharmaceutically acceptable excipient.
32. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 16, further comprising administering an antagonist of an early sepsis mediator.
33. (Previously Presented) The method of Claim 32, wherein said antagonist of an early sepsis mediator is an antagonist of TNF.